



News Release

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Mature worker regional meeting set for Paragould

LITTLE ROCK – An Arkansas Mature Worker Initiative regional meeting for employers will be held at **11:30 a.m. Nov. 30 at the Paragould Community Center**, 3404 Linwood Drive (Highway 49 South), Paragould.

Several state, local and community agencies along with AARP Arkansas have joined together with support from Gov. Mike Huckabee to increase awareness and bring attention to the value of workers 50+. Projections indicate that 43 percent of the current workforce will be eligible for retirement in the next 10 years. In addition, 61 percent of new entrants into the labor force (age 16 to 25) will not be fully qualified. These factors will result in a significant decrease in the availability of qualified workers.

The Arkansas Mature Worker Initiative will help employers meet this new challenge by increasing the awareness and appreciation of mature workers through relationships with the public workforce system, states, chambers of commerce, national and local training providers, trade associations, labor unions, community organizations, policy makers and business leaders.

Arkansas Workforce Center staff located across the state will provide assessment and employment and training assistance to mature workers and match them with employers utilizing the Arkansas Job Link System. AJL is a Web-based, job-matching system for employers and job seekers. Employers are encouraged to contact their nearest Arkansas Workforce Center or post their job orders on AJL by going to www.arjoblink.arkansas.gov.

In an effort to inform employers about the initiative, regional meetings are being held across the state. At each meeting, an employer panel including state agency and college and university officials as well as featured employers in Arkansas discuss the initiative and how companies have benefited from hiring mature workers.

The state's 15 featured employers are Adecco, Borders Group, Cendant Car Rental Group – Avis/Budget, Cingular Wireless, Comcast Cable Communications Inc., Express Personnel Services,

Kelly Services Inc., Manpower Inc., MetLife Inc., New York Life Insurance Company, Quest Diagnostics, The Home Depot, Universal Health Services, Verizon and Walgreens.

The first regional meeting was held April 18 in Little Rock, followed by meetings in Hot Springs, Fort Smith, Springdale and Mountain Home.

Employers who wish to attend the free luncheon in Paragould should R.S.V.P. to armeeting@aarpp.org by **Nov. 22**. For more information, contact Kimberly Friedman at (501) 682-3125 or Rebecca Trammell at (501) 371-1033.